



# ILLINOIS

---

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## PRODUCTION NOTE

University of Illinois at  
Urbana-Champaign Library  
Large-scale Digitization Project, 2007.



**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

**RESULTS OF THE 1993 ILLINOIS WOODCOCK  
HUNTER SURVEY**

*As Required By*

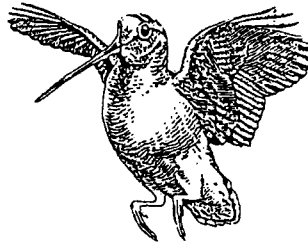
**FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION ACT**

**ILLINOIS**

**Federal Aid Project Number: W-112-R-4**

*Prepared by:*

**William L. Anderson, Larry M. David**



**Brent Manning, Director**

**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION**

**20 June 1995**

**Mike Sweet  
P-R Coordinator**

**Jeffrey M. Ver Steeg, Chief  
Division of Wildlife Resources**



Illinois Department of Conservation  
Division of Wildlife Resources  
Administrative Report  
20 June 1995

RESULTS OF THE 1993 ILLINOIS WOODCOCK HUNTER SURVEY

William L. Anderson, Investigations and Surveys Program  
Larry M. David, Upland Wildlife Program

**Abstract:** Purchasers of the 1993 Illinois Habitat Stamp who hunted American woodcock the previous year were surveyed via mail-questionnaire to determine their woodcock hunting activities, harvest, attitudes, and opinions, for the 1993 season. The mailing list consisted of 1,227 residents, 847 (69%) of which returned usable questionnaires. Because 610 (72%) of them did not hunt woodcock in Illinois again in 1993, the effective sample was reduced to 237 active hunters. Of these hunters, 61% were afield between 1 October and 5 November (before opening of the upland game season) and were classified as proactive woodcock hunters. The other 39% were afield only between 6 November and 4 December and were classified as passive woodcock hunters. For all woodcock hunters, 43% of the days afield occurred before 6 November and 57% took place on or after this date. The hunters spent an average of 6.4 days afield and harvested an average of 3.00 woodcock (0.47 per day afield). Most (87%) of the hunters pursued woodcock, at least part of the time, while hunting other game species (primarily quail, pheasant, and rabbits) in Illinois. 87% of the hunters and 81% of the days afield were associated with private land. Crippling losses equaled 9.7 birds per 100 woodcock harvested. Majorities (or pluralities) of the hunters liked the dates used for the woodcock season (1 October-4 December) in 1993 (41%), felt that the bag limit should be reduced to 3 or 4 birds per day (65%), had not used nontoxic steel shot to hunt woodcock (84%), and were unaware of the National Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (92%). On the average, Illinois woodcock hunters were 38 years of age, had hunted woodcock for 15 years, traveled 45 miles (round trip) per day afield, and spent \$228 (total \$1.41 million) on their sport; 62% usually or always used a dog. The management implications of these findings are discussed.

-----

The American woodcock (Philohela minor) is a unique game bird that breeds primarily in northeastern portions of the United States and adjacent Canada and winters in the southern states (Straw et al. 1994). Also known as "timber doodle" and "bog

sucker", woodcock nest in low densities in Illinois (Ellis and Anderson 1975, Straw et al. 1994). The uniqueness label stems from the bird's peculiar anatomy and its unusual courtship behavior (Liscinsky 1993). In his philosophical discussions, Leopold (1949) stated, "The woodcock is a living refutation of the theory that the utility of a game bird is to serve as a target, or to pose gracefully on a slice of toast. No one would rather hunt woodcock than I, but since learning of the sky dance I find myself calling one or two birds enough. I must be sure that, come April, there will be no dearth of dancers in the sunset sky."

The few hunters who pursue woodcock prize the bird for its sporting qualities, especially its propensity to hold for pointing dogs (Liscinsky 1993). Nationwide, an estimated 0.4 million hunters harvested 1.1 million woodcock in 1990 (Straw et al. 1994). Most of the harvest occurred in the Great Lake states, Louisiana, and the Northeast. In Illinois, an average of 6,200 hunters spent 28,200 days afield and harvested 11,600 woodcock in 1989-1993 (Anderson et al. 1994).

To contribute to the management of woodcock and to establish bio-sociologically acceptable hunting regulations, the Illinois Department of Conservation (DOC) must be familiar with activities and attitudes of woodcock hunters in the state. Thus, the purpose of this study was to determine when and where woodcock hunters are in the field, characteristics of their woodcock harvest, and their opinions of current and future woodcock hunting regulations. Surveys such as this improve the DOC's

understanding of rank-and-file hunters concerning the woodcock resource and the sport of woodcock hunting in Illinois.

This survey is one in a series scheduled for upland game hunters in Illinois. A rabbit hunter survey was conducted for the 1989 season, a pheasant hunter survey was conducted for the 1990 season, pheasant hunter and quail hunter surveys were conducted for the 1991 season, and a dove hunter survey was conducted for the 1992 season (Anderson and David 1991a, 1991b, 1992a, 1992b, 1994). In addition to woodcock hunters, gray partridge hunters were surveyed following the 1993 season (Anderson and David 1995), and rabbit hunters were surveyed again after the 1994 season.

#### METHODS AND MATERIALS

A 4-page, 20-question questionnaire was developed specifically for the 1993 Illinois Woodcock Hunter Survey (Fig. 1). This questionnaire and a letter of explanation (Fig. 2) were mailed to 1,227 potential woodcock hunters on 7 December 1993. Non-respondents were sent 2nd and 3rd copies of the questionnaire, and accompanying letters (Figs. 3 and 4), on 13 January and 17 February 1994, respectively. As of 21 April, 847 usable questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 69%.

The mailing list for this survey was developed from information recorded on 1993 Illinois Habitat Stamp stubs. Each stub was designed to capture the purchaser's name, mailing address, and whether he/she had hunted selected game species (including woodcock) during the previous year in Illinois (Fig.

5). Vendors were instructed to fill out the stubs and return them to the DOC Permit Office in Springfield. By sorting through the first 44,000 stubs returned (total sales was 270,717), a total of 1,227 purchasers were identified as potential woodcock hunters. These 1,227 people, all Illinois residents, were notified by letters postmarked 14 October 1993 that they would receive a questionnaire at the close of the woodcock hunting season. The notice included a form for keeping records of hunting activity and woodcock harvested (Fig. 6).

Data were transferred from the filled-out questionnaires to a computer file using a data management program (Ashton-Tate dBASE III+). The data were analyzed with a statistical program (SPSS Inc. SPSS/PC+V2.0). Results were tabulated for proactive hunters (pursued woodcock before the upland game season opened), passive hunters (pursued woodcock only during the upland game season), and all woodcock hunters combined.

#### HUNTING REGULATIONS IN 1993

Hunting seasons and bag limits for woodcock and other migratory birds are regulated with frameworks promulgated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). States set their seasons within these frameworks. In Illinois, the 1993 woodcock season began on 1 October and ended on 4 December. These dates applied statewide. Bag limits were 5 birds per day and 10 in possession, and legal shooting time was from sunrise to sunset.



## FINDINGS

The 847 individuals who filled out and returned the questionnaire purchased an average of 1.09 Illinois Habitat Stamps for the 1993 season. The overwhelming majority (93.4%) purchased 1 stamp, while 4.8% purchased 2 stamps and 1.8% purchased 3-5 stamps.

Among the 847 respondents, 813 (96%) purchased an Illinois resident hunting license, 237 (28%) hunted woodcock in Illinois, and 21 (2.5%) hunted woodcock in another state, in 1993 (Table 1). Of those who traveled to another state, 29% did so specifically to hunt woodcock. The other 71% viewed woodcock as a bonus bird while hunting other species such as ruffed grouse.

### Hunter Activities

Of the 237 active woodcock hunters in the sample, 144 (61%) were afield between 1 October and 5 November (before opening of the upland game season) and 193 (81%) were afield between November 6 and December 4 (during upland game season) in 1993 (Table 2). Further breakdown of the data show that 44 (19%) of the hunters were afield only between 1 October and 5 November, 93 (39%) were afield only between 6 November and December 4, and 100 (42%) were afield during both time periods. Thus, for purposes of this report, there were 144 (61%) proactive woodcock hunters and 93 (39%) passive woodcock hunters in the sample.

Woodcock hunters expended 43% of their days afield before 6 November (opening day of upland game season) and 57% of their days afield on or after this date in 1993 (Table 2). Proactive

hunters accounted for 72% of the days afield and passive hunters accounted for only 28%.

Proactive woodcock hunters, most of whom were active both before and during upland game season, spent an average of 7.6 days afield in 1993 (Table 3). Passive hunters, who pursued woodcock during the upland game season only, spent an average of 4.5 days afield. All woodcock hunters combined spent an average of 6.4 days afield. More than one-half (57%) of the hunters were afield  $\leq 5$  days. In comparison, the annual Illinois Hunter Harvest Survey indicated that woodcock hunters (proactive and passive combined) spent an average of 3.8 days afield, and that 83% of them were afield  $\leq 5$  days, during the 1993 season (Anderson et al. 1994).

Most of the woodcock hunters (87%) and their days afield (80%) were associated with private land (Table 4). About one-fourth (27%) of the hunters were active on public land, where 20% of the total days afield were expended.

More than one-half (62%) of the woodcock hunters usually or always used a dog to hunt woodcock (Table 5). The percentages for proactive hunters (62%) and passive hunters (61%) were essentially the same. In comparison, 64% of gray partridge hunters usually or always used a dog (Anderson and David 1995).

As might be expected in Illinois, almost all (87%) of the woodcock hunters pursued woodcock, at least part of the time, while also hunting other game species (Table 6). The percentage was higher for passive hunters (95%) than for proactive hunters (81%). The other game species most frequently associated with

woodcock hunting were quail (68% of the hunters), pheasant (39%), and rabbits (37%).

#### Woodcock Harvest

Woodcock hunters reported harvesting an average of 0.47 woodcock per day afield and 3.00 woodcock per hunter during the 1993 season (Table 2). Harvest rates were appreciably greater before opening of the upland game season (0.60 woodcock per day afield and 2.71 per hunter) than during the upland game season (0.37 and 1.67). Similarly, harvest rates were greater for proactive hunters (0.51 and 3.89) than for passive hunters (0.36 and 1.63) (Table 3).

For all hunters in the present survey, 43% took 0 woodcock, 43% took 1-5 woodcock, and 14% took 6-45 woodcock, during the entire 1993 season. In comparison, the annual Illinois Hunter Harvest Survey indicated that woodcock hunters averaged 1.8 birds each in 1993; 26% of the hunters took 0 woodcock, 70% took 1-5 woodcock, and 4% took  $\geq 6$  woodcock (Anderson et al. 1994).

In the present survey, hunters reported harvesting  $\leq 2$  woodcock on 95% of their days afield during the 1993 season (Table 7). They harvested 0 woodcock on 74% of their days afield. At the other extreme, woodcock hunters managed to harvest 5 birds, the daily bag limit, on only 0.6% of their days afield. These data suggest that the average woodcock hunter rarely obtains his daily limit of birds in Illinois.

An estimated 69% of the 1993 woodcock harvest occurred in 16 counties (Fig. 7). Six counties along the Illinois River

accounted for 24% of the harvest. Virtually all of the counties highlighted in Figure 7 are associated with rivers, large lakes, and/or other wetlands. Wetland areas must be in close proximity to forest cover to qualify as woodcock habitat (Sheldon 1967:122).

The hunters in the sample reported harvesting a total of 712 woodcock and losing another 69 birds as cripples during the 1993 season. Based on these data, the crippling rate was 9.7 birds lost per 100 retrieved.

#### Attitudes and Opinions

Leasing Places to Hunt. When asked whether they would be willing to pay a landowner in Illinois for the privilege of hunting woodcock, 24% answered "yes" (Table 8). The daily fee these hunters would be willing to pay averaged \$16.58. In general, woodcock hunters exhibited slightly less interest than rabbit, quail, and dove hunters, and much less interest than pheasant hunters, in paying for the right to hunt (Anderson and David 1991a, 1992a, 1992b, 1994).

Season Length and Daily Bag Limit. In the opinion of a plurality (41%) of the hunters, current dates (1 October to 4 December) are about right for the woodcock season (Table 9). The remaining hunters were somewhat split as to whether the season should be earlier (24%) or later (35%).

When asked how they felt about the number of woodcock that should be allowed in the daily bag limit, a plurality (41%) of the hunters preferred 3 birds (Table 9). Only 22% of the hunters

opted for the current bag limit of 5 birds. Hunters expressed much more sentiment for decreasing the limit (65%) than for increasing it (14%).

Nontoxic Steel Shot. When asked if they had ever hunted woodcock with nontoxic steel shot, 16% of the active hunters answered "yes" (Table 10). Similarly, if steel shot were to become mandatory for woodcock, 42% of the hunters indicated they would continue to hunt this species. However, almost as many of the hunters (38%) said they would not pursue woodcock with steel shot.

National Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program. After describing the National Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP), the woodcock hunters were asked whether they were previously aware that this program was scheduled for implementation in Illinois (Table 11). Only a handful (8%) of them were. When asked whether they thought HIP was an appropriate or inappropriate action for the federal government to take, the woodcock hunters were equally divided. These findings are similar to those recorded for waterfowl hunters and dove hunters in Illinois in 1992 (Anderson and David 1994, Anderson and Williamson 1994). It appears that Illinois' migratory bird hunters are poorly informed about HIP, and that an aggressive public education campaign is needed for this program.

#### Characteristics of Woodcock Hunters

Woodcock hunters who participated in the survey were, on the average, 38 years of age (Table 12). They had hunted woodcock

for an average of 15 years, and they traveled an average of 45 miles (round trip) per day afield in 1993. About two-thirds (66%) of the hunters were active in only 1 county; 25% were active in 2 counties and 9% were active in  $\geq 3$  counties (n=237). Similarly, the vast majority (75%) of hunters were active in their county of residence, and nearly one-half (46%) of them hunted only in their county of residence (n=237). Woodcock hunters appear to be about as mobile as quail hunters, more mobile than rabbit and dove hunters, and less mobile than pheasant and gray partridge hunters (Anderson and David 1991a, 1992a, 1992b, 1994, 1995).

#### Economics of Woodcock Hunting

Active woodcock hunters reported spending an average of \$228 on their sport in Illinois during the 1993 season (Table 13). More than one-half (55%) of the hunters spent <\$100 and 10% spent >\$500. When the average (\$228) was applied to the total number of woodcock hunters in the state, expenditures for woodcock hunting totaled \$1.41 million annually (Table 13). In comparison, rabbit hunters spent \$25.4 million (average \$156) in 1989, pheasant hunters spent \$30.8 million (average \$294) in 1990, quail hunters spent \$24.8 million (average \$289) in 1991, dove hunters spent \$10.2 million (average \$138) in 1992, and gray partridge hunter spent \$0.37 million (average \$200) in 1993 (Anderson and David 1991a, 1991b, 1992b, 1994, 1995). In a 1991 national survey, migratory bird hunters reported spending \$228 apiece annually (U.S. Department of the Interior 1993:86).

## DISCUSSION

Because 1993 marked the inauguration of the Illinois Habitat Stamp, it was necessary to use stubs from the first 44,000 stamps (16% of total) sold to develop the mailing list for the 1993 Illinois Woodcock Hunter Survey. In other words, the mailing list favored those people who purchased the Habitat Stamp early in the year and excluded the late purchasers. This sampling approach may have introduced biases into the survey and findings should be interpreted with an awareness of these potential biases.

The findings of this survey confirm that Illinois woodcock hunters are similar to the profile that has long been suspected. That is, most of them exhibit inconsistent activity from year to year, and when they do hunt woodcock, it is coincidental to pursuing other game species. The latter is characteristic of woodcock hunters in most other states (Sheldon 1967:117,121). Of 847 participants in the survey, all of whom hunted woodcock the previous year (if they accurately filled out their Habitat Stamp stub), only 237 (28%) hunted woodcock again in 1993. Gray partridge hunters also have a low (17%) incidence of hunting activity in back-to-back years (Anderson and David 1995). For other upland game hunters, the percentage who pursued the same species in back-to-back years was 65-68% (Anderson and David 1991a, 1991b, 1992b, 1994). This survey also disclosed that 87% of the woodcock hunters pursued woodcock, at least part of the time, while hunting other game species (Table 6). Clearly, to most Illinois hunters, the woodcock is a bonus bird that is taken

while pursuing quail, pheasants, rabbits, and other game species.

Nevertheless, there is a small segment, or "fraternity", of Illinois sportsmen who appear to be avid woodcock hunters. An estimated 870 (14%) of the hunters spent 11-65 days afield and harvested 6-45 woodcock during the 1993 season (Table 3). In addition, an estimated 236 of them ventured to another state to hunt woodcock. As was pointed out in the INTRODUCTION, woodcock hunters admire their quarry for its sporting qualities, including the quality dog work it illicit.

Daily harvest rates for woodcock in Illinois have apparently declined over the past 25 years. Preno (1973) reported an average harvest of 0.85 bird per day afield in 1969-1972, which was nearly twice as high as the 0.47-bird-per-day rate indicated in the present study for 1993 (Table 2). The Illinois Hunter Harvest Survey also indicated a harvest rate of 0.47 bird per day afield for the 1993 season (Anderson et al. 1994).

However, Illinois woodcock hunters apparently hunted more often and harvested more woodcock in 1993 (6.4 days and 3.0 birds per hunter) than during 1969-1972 (2.3 days and 1.9 birds per hunter) (Table 2 and Preno 1973). According to a national survey, woodcock harvest in the Central Region, which includes Illinois, declined 4.2% from 1992 to 1993 and was slightly below the long-term average in 1993 (Kendall and Bruggink 1994).

In 1993, Illinois woodcock hunters were afield about the same number of days as Wisconsin woodcock hunters (6.1 days per hunter) (Dhuey 1994). However, Wisconsin hunters harvested more woodcock per day afield (0.56 birds) and per season (3.4 birds)



than Illinois hunters (Table 2). In Wisconsin, there was an estimated 34,690 woodcock hunters (13% of small game hunters) who harvested 118,366 woodcock in 1993. In comparison, Illinois had only 4,532 woodcock hunters (2.6% of upland game hunters) who harvested 8,004 woodcock in that year (Anderson et al. 1994).

Illinois' hunters appear to be reasonably well satisfied with 1993 woodcock season dates of 1 October through 4 December (Table 9). Current season dates coincide well with woodcock migration (Greg 1984). Hunters who preferred changing the season dates were divided as to whether the season should be earlier (24%) or later (35%). Based on these findings, and assuming that the FWS will continue to allow 65 days for woodcock hunting, we recommend continuing with 1 October for the opening day of the woodcock season in Illinois. However, should the FWS reduce the number of days for woodcock hunting, we recommend using the 30-day period from 15 October to 13 November for the core of the season. Any additional days would be added equally to the front and back ends of the season.

Woodcock hunters apparently believe that the current bag limit of 5 birds per day is excessive. Two-thirds (65%) of them preferred reducing the bag limit to 3 or 4 birds per day (Table 9). Only 14% of the hunters voted to increase the bag to 6 birds per day. These findings suggest that a reduction in the bag limit to 3 or 4 woodcock per day would have the support of a majority of the hunters.

Acknowledgements. Appreciation is extended to J.C. Cole and D. Major for assistance in developing the questionnaire used for this survey; to J.C. Cole, S.L. Etter, M.A. Gregonis, and D. Major for critically reading a preliminary draft of this report; and to L.K. Campbell, K.K. Benner, and A.E. Zielske for data and word processing. This study was funded in part by Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project W-112-R, the DOC, Illinois Natural History Survey, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, cooperating.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Anderson, W.L., L.K. Campbell, and K. Benner. 1994. Illinois Hunter harvest survey, 1993-94. Ill. Dep. Conserv., P-R Project W-112-R-4, Study 101, Job 1, Job Completion Rep. 71pp+appendix.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and L.M. David. 1991a. Results of the 1989 Illinois rabbit hunter survey. Ill. Dep. Conserv., Div. Wildl. Res., Admin. Rep. (3 May 1991). 35pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. 1991b. Results of the 1990 pheasant hunter survey. Ill. Dep. Conserv., Div. Wildl. Res., Admin. Rep. (17 October 1991). 36pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. 1992a. Results of the 1991-92 pheasant hunter survey. Ill. Dep. Conserv., Div. Wildl. Res., Admin. Rep. (15 December 1992) 37pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. 1992b. Results of the 1991-92 Illinois quail hunter survey. Ill. Dep. Conserv., Div. Wildl., Res., Admin. Rep. (16 December 1992). 41pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. Results of the 1992 Illinois mourning dove hunter survey. Ill. Dep. Conserv., Div. Wildl. Res., Admin. Rep. (8 March 1994). 46pp+appendix.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. 1995. Results of the 1993 Illinois gray partridge hunter survey. Ill. Dep. Cconserv., Div. Wildl. Res., Admin. Rep. (21 June 1995) 32pp.

- \_\_\_\_\_, and R.A. Williamson. 1994. Illinois waterfowl harvest, hunter activity, and attitudes toward September teal season, duck hunting time, and goose hunting regulations, in 1994. Ill. Dep. Conserv., Waterfowl Program, Period. Rep. 80. 58pp+appendix.
- Dhuey, B. 1994. Small game harvest, 1993-94. Pages 2-4 in B. Dhuey, compiler. Wisconsin wildlife surveys, August 1994. Wisc. Dep. Nat. Resour., Monona. 110pp.
- Ellis, J.A., and W.L. Anderson. 1975. Observations of woodcock (Philohela minor) on two areas in southern Illinois. Trans. Ill. State Acad. Sci. 68(3):308-312.
- Gregg, L. 1984. Population ecology of woodcock in Wisconsin. Wisc. Dep. Nat. Resour., Madison, Tech. Bull. No. 144. 51pp.
- Kendall, W.L., and J.G. Bruggink. 1994. American woodcock harvest and breeding population status, 1994. U.S. Fish and Wildl. Ser., Washington, D.C. 14pp.
- Leopold, A. 1949. A sand county almanac. Oxford University Press, New York. 226pp.
- Liscinsky, 1993. Why bother worrying about woodcock--a philosophical essay. Pages 1-4 in J.R. Longcore and G.F. Sepik, eds. Proceedings of the eighth American woodcock symposium. U.S. Dept. Interior, Fish and Wildl. Serv., Washington, D.C., Biol. Rep. 16.
- Preno, W.L. 1973. Harvest of Hungarian partridge (1961-72), raccoons (1963-72), red and gray foxes (1967-72), woodcock (1969-72) in Illinois. Ill. Dep. Conserv., Unpubl. manuscript. 31pp.
- Sheldon, W.G. 1967. The book of the American woodcock. U. Mass. Press, Amherst. 227pp.
- Straw, J.A., Jr., D.G. Krementz, M.W. Olinde, and G.F. Sepik. 1994. American woodcock. Pages 97-114 in T.C. Tacha and C.E. Braun, eds. Migratory shore and upland game bird management in North America. Intern. Assoc. Fish and Wildl. Agenc., Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 1993. 1991 national survey of fishing, hunting, and wildlife associated recreation. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 124pp+appendices.

Table 1. Percentage of respondents to the 1993 Illinois Woodcock Hunter Survey who purchased a resident hunting license, hunted woodcock in Illinois, and hunted woodcock in another state, in 1993 (n = 847 state residents).

Activity	Number	Percentages
Purchased resident Illinois hunting license	813	96.0
Hunted woodcock in Illinois	237	28.0
Hunted woodcock in another state	21 <sup>a</sup>	2.5 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Includes 9 respondents who hunted woodcock in Illinois and also in another state.

Table 2. Temporal distribution of woodcock hunters, days afield, and harvest in Illinois in 1993. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Parameter	Oct. 1-Nov. 5 <sup>a</sup> (144) <sup>c</sup>	Nov. 6-Dec. 4 <sup>b</sup> (193) <sup>d</sup>	Entire Season (237)
Hunter			
Percentage	60.8 <sup>c</sup>	81.4 <sup>d</sup>	100
Days afield			
Percentage	42.9	57.1	100
Per hunter	4.5	4.5	6.4
Woodcock harvested			
Percentage	54.8	45.2	100
Per day afield	0.60	0.37	0.47
Per hunter per time period	2.71	1.67	3.00

<sup>a</sup>Before opening of the upland game (quail, pheasant, and rabbit) season.

<sup>b</sup>During the upland game season.

<sup>c</sup>Includes 44 (18.6%) hunters who were active only during Oct. 1-Nov. 5.

<sup>d</sup>Includes 93 (39.2%) hunters who were active only during Nov. 6-Dec. 4.

Table 3. Woodcock hunting activity and harvest in Illinois in 1993. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Parameter	Proactive Hunters <sup>a</sup> (144)	Passive Hunters <sup>b</sup> (93)	All Hunters (237)
Hunters			
Percentage	60.8	39.2	100
Days afield			
Percentage	72.4	27.6	100
Per hunter	7.6	4.5	6.4 <sup>c</sup>
Woodcock Harvested			
Percentage	78.7	21.3	100
Per day afield	0.51	0.36	0.47
Per hunter per time period	3.89	1.63	3.00 <sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Hunted woodcock before the upland game (quail, pheasant, and rabbit) season opened on November 6. Most (69%) of the hunters also pursued woodcock after opening of the upland game season.

<sup>b</sup>Hunted woodcock only after the upland game season opened.

<sup>c</sup>39.7% hunted 1-3 days, 17.7% hunted 4-5 days, 29.1% hunted 6-10 days, 7.6% hunted 11-15 days, and 5.9% hunted 16-65 days.

<sup>d</sup>43.0% harvested 0 woodcock, 43.1% harvested 1-5 woodcock, 7.1% harvested 6-10 woodcock, and 6.8% harvested 11-45 woodcock.

Table 4. Types of land utilized by woodcock hunters in Illinois in 1993. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Subject	Proactive Hunters (144)	Passive Hunters ( 93)	All Hunters (237)
Type of land			
Private - hunters	84.5%	91.4%	87.3%
- days afield	78.1	86.5	80.5
Public - hunters	31.3	21.5	27.4
- days afield	21.9	13.5	19.5

Table 5. Frequency that woodcock hunters used a dog to hunt woodcock in Illinois in 1993. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Frequency Dog was used	Proactive Hunters (143)	Passive Hunters (93)	All Hunters (236)
Always	53.8%	51.6%	53.0%
Usually	8.4	9.7	8.9
Occasionally	9.1	9.7	9.3
Never	28.7	29.0	28.8

Table 6. Frequency that hunters pursued woodcock while also hunting for other game species in Illinois in 1993. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Subject	Proactive Hunters (144)	Passive Hunters (93)	All Hunters (237)
Hunted woodcock while also hunting other species	81.3%	94.6%	86.5%
Other Species	(144)	(93)	(237)
Quail	62.5%	75.3%	67.5%
Pheasant	30.6	51.6	38.8
Rabbit	32.6	43.0	36.7
Squirrel	11.1	5.4	8.9
Dove	9.0	0.0	5.5
Others	6.9	4.3	5.5

Table 7. Number and percentage of days that woodcock hunters harvested 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 woodcock in Illinois in 1993. Sample sizes are parentheses.

Number of Woodcock	Proactive Hunters		Passive Hunters		All Hunters	
	Mean	Percentage	Mean	Percentage	Mean	Percentage
		(1,026)		(429)		(1,455)
0	5.2	72.7	3.6	77.2	4.5	74.0
1	0.9	12.2	0.6	13.5	0.8	12.5
2	0.7	9.3	0.3	7.0	0.5	8.6
3	0.3	3.7	0.1	1.6	0.2	3.1
4	0.1	1.4	<0.1	0.5	0.1	1.1
5	<0.1	0.7	<0.1	0.2	<0.1	0.6

Table 8. Attitudes of woodcock hunters toward paying a landowner for the rights to hunt woodcock (Illinois 1993). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Subject	Proactive Hunters	Passive Hunters	All Hunters
Willing to pay landowner	(143)	(93)	(236)
Yes	28.7%	17.2%	24.2%
No	51.0	71.0	58.9
No opinion	20.3	11.8	18.9
Amount willing to pay per day	(40)	(16)	(56)
<\$16	70.0%	62.4%	67.8%
\$16 - \$30	20.0	25.0	21.4
\$31 - \$50	5.0	6.3	5.4
>\$50	5.0	6.3	5.4
Mean	\$15.98	\$18.02	\$16.58

Table 9. Attitudes of woodcock hunters toward season dates and the daily bag limit for woodcock hunting (Illinois 1993). Sample sizes are parentheses.

Question	Proactive Hunters	Passive Hunters	All Hunters
Responses to the following questions:			
*In your opinion, what should the Illinois woodcock season dates be next season (1994-95)?			
	(141)	(90)	(231)
Sept. 15-Nov. 18	29.1%	15.6%	23.8%
Oct. 1-Dec. 4	44.7	35.6	41.1
Oct. 15-Dec. 18	26.2	48.8	35.1
*In your opinion, how many woodcock should be allowed in the daily bag limit in Illinois next season (1994-95)?			
	(141)	(90)	(231)
3 per day	40.4%	41.0%	40.7%
4 " "	22.7	25.6	23.8
5 " "	24.1	17.8	21.6
6 " "	12.8	15.6	13.9



Table 10. Attitudes of woodcock hunters toward using nontoxic steel shot for woodcock hunting (Illinois 1993). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Question	Proactive Hunters	Passive Hunters	All Hunters
Responses to the questions:			
*Have you ever used non-toxic steel shot for hunting woodcock?			
	(140)	(93)	(233)
Yes	19.3%	10.8%	15.9%
No	80.7	89.2	84.1
*If the use of non-toxic steel shot became mandatory for hunting woodcock, would you continue to hunt woodcock using non-toxic steel shot?			
	(142)	(89)	(231)
Yes	45.1%	38.2%	42.4%
No	33.1	46.1	38.1
Don't know	21.8	15.7	19.5

Table 11. Attitudes of woodcock hunters toward the National Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (Illinois 1993). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Question	Proactive Hunters	Passive Hunters	All Hunters
Responses to a multi-part question prefaced with the statement, <p>"A new Federal Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program will be implemented for woodcock (and other migratory game bird) hunters in Illinois (and most other states) in 1996. Hunters will be required to show proof (for example, carry a card that costs \$2.00 annually) that their name and mailing address is on record with this Federal program. The purpose of the program is to improve management of migratory game birds through more accurate harvest surveys."</p>			
	(142)	(93)	(235)
Yes	7.7%	8.6%	8.1%
No	92.3	91.4	91.9
*In your opinion, is implementation of a Federal Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program an appropriate or inappropriate action of the Federal government to take for the purpose of improving the management of migratory game birds?			
	(144)	(92)	(236)
Appropriate	48.6%	32.6%	42.3%
Inappropriate	35.4	47.8	40.3
No opinion	16.0	19.6	17.4

Table 12. Some characteristics of woodcock hunters in Illinois in 1993. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Characteristics	Proactive Hunters	Passive Hunters	All Hunters
Age in years	(144)	(93)	(237)
Mean	37.6	37.7	37.6
Distribution: $\leq 15$	2.1%	1.1%	1.3%
16 - 20	5.5	3.1	5.0
21 - 30	18.8	24.7	21.1
31 - 40	35.4	35.5	35.5
41 - 50	26.4	19.4	23.6
51 - 60	8.3	12.9	10.1
61 - 64	0.7	2.1	1.3
$\geq 65$	2.8	1.1	2.1
Years hunted woodcock	(142)	(92)	(234)
Mean	13.8	15.5	14.5
Distribution: 1 - 5	28.2%	21.7%	25.6%
6 - 10	21.1	20.7	21.0
11 - 20	33.8	31.5	32.9
$\geq 21$	16.9	26.1	20.5
Miles driven per day <sup>a</sup>	(142)	(91)	(233)
Mean	40.3	51.9	44.9
Distribution: 1 - 5	20.4%	26.4%	22.7%
6 - 10	13.4	16.5	14.6
11 - 20	14.1	19.7	16.3
21 - 30	14.1	7.7	11.6
31 - 50	12.6	5.5	9.9
51 - 100	18.4	12.1	15.9
$\geq 101$	7.0	12.1	9.0

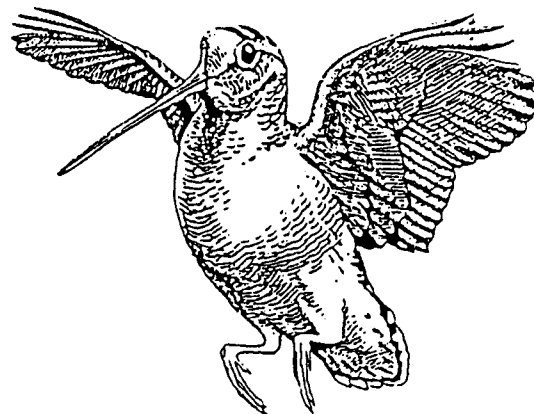
<sup>a</sup>Round trip.

Table 13. Estimated annual expenditures by woodcock hunters in Illinois. Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Money Spent	Proactive Hunters (141)	Passive Hunters (92)	All Hunters (233)
<\$100	48.2%	66.2%	55.3%
\$100 - \$250	27.7	12.0	21.5
\$251 - \$500	14.2	12.0	13.3
\$501 - \$1,000	7.1	7.6	7.3
\$1,001 - \$2,000	1.4	1.1	1.3
>\$2,000	1.4	1.1	1.3
Mean	\$242	\$206	\$228
Total <sup>a</sup> (in millions)	\$0.91	\$0.50	\$1.41

<sup>a</sup>Based on an average of 6,200 woodcock hunters in Illinois in 1989-1993 (Anderson and Campbell 1994).

# 1993-94 ILLINOIS WOODCOCK HUNTER SURVEY



## INSTRUCTIONS

Please answer the questions on the following pages for your woodcock hunting activities in Illinois during the 1993-94 season. A woodcock is not the same as a woodchuck, which is a burrowing mammal in the rodent family. The woodcock is a migratory game bird from the shorebird family (see drawing above). During migration woodcock may occur over nearly all of Illinois.

If you did not hunt woodcock in Illinois in 1993-94, answer only the questions that apply to you (PART I and PART III). Your opinions are important even if you did not hunt.

Report only your kill. DO NOT report the kill of others with whom you may have hunted. Your responses are strictly confidential and will never be associated with your name. Since you are a part of a small, randomly selected group, your participation is very important.

If you can't remember exact figures, give your best estimate. When completed, insert questionnaire into the self-addressed envelope and mail. Comments are welcome but please write them on a separate sheet of paper to receive proper attention.

---

### PART I. General Information

1. Did you purchase a resident Illinois hunting license for the 1993-94 season? (circle number of appropriate answer)

Yes.....1

No.....2

2. How many 1993 Illinois Habitat Stamps did you purchase for your personal use?

Number of Habitat Stamps.....

3. Did you hunt woodcock in Illinois during the 1993-94 season? (circle number of appropriate answer)

Yes.....1

No.....2

4. Did you hunt woodcock in another state during the 1993-94 season? (circle number of appropriate answer)

Yes.....1

No.....2

- 4a. If you hunted woodcock in another state during 1993-94, were you hunting specifically for woodcock, or was woodcock a "bonus" species taken while hunting primarily for another gamebird such as ruffed grouse?

Specific for woodcock....1 Woodcock as bonus....2

IF YOU DID NOT HUNT WOODCOCK IN ILLINOIS DURING THE 1993-94 SEASON,  
SKIP TO PART III - QUESTION # 14.

PART II. Woodcock Hunting Activity

5. If you answered "yes" to Question #3 above (you hunted woodcock in Illinois in 1993-94), please answer the following questions about the number of different days you hunted woodcock in Illinois and the number of woodcock you harvested for each month of the 1993-94 season? (write in the number of days and number of woodcock that apply)

Number of days Oct. 1 to Nov. 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Number harvested \_\_\_\_\_

Number of days Nov. 6 to Dec. 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Number harvested \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of days.....\_\_\_\_\_ Total woodcock.....\_\_\_\_\_

6. On how many different days during the 1993-94 season in Illinois did you bag (kill and retrieve):

a. no woodcock (zero)? \_\_\_\_\_ days

b. 1 woodcock? \_\_\_\_\_ days

c. 2 woodcock? \_\_\_\_\_ days

d. 3 woodcock? \_\_\_\_\_ days

e. 4 woodcock? \_\_\_\_\_ days

f. 5 woodcock? \_\_\_\_\_ days

7. In which county, or counties, did you hunt woodcock most in Illinois in 1993-94?

	<u>County</u>	<u>Number of Days</u>
Hunted most	_____	_____
Second most	_____	_____
Third most	_____	_____

8. How often did you use a dog when hunting woodcock in Illinois in 1993-94?

Always...1 Usually...2 Occasionally...3 Never....4

9. Did you hunt woodcock in Illinois in 1993-94 while also hunting for other species?

Yes.....1      No.....2

8a. If "yes", please list the other species.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. How many woodcock did you cripple but did not retrieve while hunting in Illinois in 1993-94?

Number of cripples lost.....\_\_\_\_\_

11. On what type(s) of lands did you hunt woodcock in Illinois in 1993-94 and on how many days did you hunt on each type of land?

(circle number of all that apply and write in the number of days)

Privately owned lands?....1      Number of days \_\_\_\_\_

Publicly owned lands?.....2      Number of days \_\_\_\_\_  
(State and Federal)

12. How many miles did you travel (round trip) on a typical woodcock hunting trip in Illinois in 1993-94?

Number of miles \_\_\_\_\_

13. About how much money do you think you spent for woodcock hunting in Illinois during the 1993-94 season (or the last season you hunted)? Include license fees, travel and gasoline, lodging, food and drink, dogs and their maintenance, guns, ammo, clothing, boots, and other equipment purchased for the 1993-94 season. (circle number of appropriate answer)

Less than \$100.....1      \$501 to \$1000.....4

\$100 to \$250.....2      \$1001 to \$2000.....5

\$251 to \$500.....3      More than \$2000.....6

PART III. Opinion Questions. Please answer even if you did not hunt in 1993-94.

14. Would you be willing to pay a landowner in Illinois for the privilege of hunting woodcock? (circle number of appropriate answer)

Yes.....1      No.....2      Undecided.....3

14a. If you answered "yes" to question 14, about how much would you be willing to pay per day?  
(circle number of appropriate answer)

Under \$16.....1      \$16-30.....2      \$31-50.....3      Over \$50.....4

15. Have you ever used non-toxic steel shot for hunting woodcock?

Yes.....1      No.....2

15a. If the use of non-toxic steel shot became mandatory for hunting woodcock, would you continue to hunt woodcock using non-toxic steel shot?

Yes.....1      No.....2      Don't Know.....3

16. In your opinion, how many woodcock should be allowed in the daily bag limit in Illinois next season (1994-95)?  
(circle appropriate number)

3 per day      4 per day

5 per day      6 per day

17. In your opinion, what should the Illinois woodcock season dates be next season (1994-95)?  
(circle dates of your first choice)

Sept. 15 - Nov. 18      Oct. 1 - Dec. 4      Oct. 15 - Dec. 18

18. A new Federal Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program will be implemented for woodcock (and other migratory game bird) hunters in Illinois (and most other states) in 1996. Hunters will be required to show proof (for example, carry a card that costs \$2.00 annually) that their name and mailing address is on record with this Federal program. The purpose of the program is to improve management of migratory game birds through more accurate harvest surveys.

18a. Were you previously aware that this new requirement is scheduled for implementation in Illinois and the rest of the nation?

Yes.....1      No.....2

18b. In your opinion, is implementation of a Federal Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program an appropriate or inappropriate action for the Federal government to take for the purpose of improving the management of migratory game birds?

Appropriate.....1      Inappropriate.....2      No opinion.....3

19. How many years have you hunted woodcock?

Number of years \_\_\_\_\_

20. How old were you on your last birthday?

Years of age \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your cooperation.  
POSTAGE IS PREPAID





# Illinois Department of Conservation

LINCOLN TOWER PLAZA • 524 SOUTH SECOND STREET • SPRINGFIELD 62701-1787

CHICAGO OFFICE • ROOM 4-300 • 100 WEST RANDOLPH • CHICAGO 60601

Brent Manning, Director

John W. Comerio, Deputy Director

Bruce F. Clay, Assistant Director

Dear Fellow Sportsman:

You are one of a select group of Illinoisans asked to furnish information on your woodcock hunting activities during the past hunting season.

The information supplied by you and other selected hunters is vital to the management of the Illinois woodcock. Our goals are to safeguard woodcock populations, to grant maximum hunting opportunity to licensed hunters, and to maintain an attractive level of hunter success.

The information you provide will be used to better understand the characteristics of the Illinois woodcock population and woodcock hunters. It also will help us understand how hunters view their sport.

Your reply is very important, even if you did not hunt woodcock or were not successful this past season. Only a limited number of hunters can be contacted, therefore, your response is urgently needed.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the parts of the questionnaire that apply to you. If you do not remember exact figures, please give your best estimate.

Drop the completed questionnaire in the mail. Postage is prepaid.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Ver Steeg  
Chief

Division of Wildlife Resources

JMV:LD:rls

Enclosure

Figure 2. The letter that accompanied the first mailing of the questionnaire.



# Illinois Department of Conservation

LINCOLN TOWER PLAZA • 524 SOUTH SECOND STREET • SPRINGFIELD 62701-1787

CHICAGO OFFICE • ROOM 4-300 • 101 WEST RANDOLPH • CHICAGO 60601

Brent Manning, Director

John W. Comerio, Deputy Director

Bruce F. Clay, Assistant Director

Dear Fellow Sportsman:

Recently we mailed you a Woodcock Hunter Survey, and requested that you fill it out and return it as soon as possible. We have not received your form at this time. Perhaps you have misplaced the questionnaire or haven't found time to complete it.

We are enclosing another questionnaire which we hope you will complete and return to us. If you have already returned a questionnaire, please discard this one. The information supplied by you and other woodcock hunters being sampled will be of great value to the Department of Conservation in better directing the management of our wildlife resources.

Please fill out the questionnaire completely and return it even if you did not hunt woodcock or were not successful this past season.

Please drop the completed questionnaire in the mail. Postage is prepaid. Your prompt attention will be sincerely appreciated.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Ver Steeg

Chief

Division of Wildlife Resources

JMV:LD:rls

Enclosure

Figure 3. The letter that accompanied the second mailing of the questionnaire.



# Illinois Department of Conservation

LINCOLN TOWER PLAZA • 524 SOUTH SECOND STREET • SPRINGFIELD 62701-1787 CHICAGO OFFICE • ROOM 4-300 • 100 WEST RANDOLPH • CHICAGO 60601

Brent Manning, Director

John W. Comerio, Deputy Director

Bruce F. Clay, Assistant Director

Dear Fellow Sportsman:

This letter is to remind you that we still would like to receive a report of your woodcock hunting activities for the past season. We don't like to keep bothering you, but this information is very important and only you can supply it.

Another copy of the questionnaire is enclosed. We hope you will complete it and return it as soon as possible. If you have already returned a questionnaire, please discard this one. Your response is needed, even though you did not hunt woodcock this past year or had an unsuccessful season.

Postage is prepaid for returning the questionnaire. Please drop the completed questionnaire in the mail. Your prompt attention will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Ver Steeg  
Chief

Division of Wildlife Resources

JMV:LD:rls

Enclosure

Figure 4. The letter that accompanied the third mailing of the questionnaire.

<b>Habitat Stamp ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION 1993</b>		<b>310799</b>
Name	County of Residence	<b>*Check species hunted last season</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Rabbit <input type="checkbox"/> Quail <input type="checkbox"/> Pheasant <input type="checkbox"/> Squirrels <input type="checkbox"/> Furbearers <input type="checkbox"/> Crow <input type="checkbox"/> Doves <input type="checkbox"/> Woodcock <input type="checkbox"/> Partridge <input type="checkbox"/> Groundhog <input type="checkbox"/> Trapped for Furbearers
Address	City, State & Zip Code	
Signature of Applicant	Date	
(This Stub To Be Returned To Department)		

<b>Habitat Stamp ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION 1993</b>		<b>310800</b>
Name	County of Residence	<b>*Check species hunted last season</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Rabbit <input type="checkbox"/> Quail <input type="checkbox"/> Pheasant <input type="checkbox"/> Squirrels <input type="checkbox"/> Furbearers <input type="checkbox"/> Crow <input type="checkbox"/> Doves <input type="checkbox"/> Woodcock <input type="checkbox"/> Partridge <input type="checkbox"/> Groundhog <input type="checkbox"/> Trapped for Furbearers
Address	City, State & Zip Code	
Signature of Applicant	Date	
(This Stub To Be Returned To Department)		

Figure 5. The stubs that were attached to the 1993 Illinois Habitat Stamps.

The Department of Conservation is interested in information about woodcock hunting in Illinois. You have been identified as a woodcock hunter from your Habitat Stamp stub. Please keep an accurate record of the number of days that you hunt woodcock and the number you harvest in Illinois.

At the close of the hunting season, we will mail you a questionnaire to fill out and return to us. This information will assist the Department in the proper management of the Illinois wildlife resource.

The Illinois Department of Conservation receives Federal financial assistance and therefore must comply with the federal anti-discrimination laws. In compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act, the Illinois Constitution, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the U.S. Constitution, the Illinois Department of Conservation does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility please contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Office, Department of Conservation, 524 S. Second St., Springfield, IL 62701-1787; 217/782-7616 or the Office of Human Resources, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Washington, DC 20240. Department of Conservation information is available to the hearing impaired by calling DOC's Telecommunications Device for the Deaf: 217/782-9175. The Illinois Relay Number is 800/526-0844.

## MY PERSONAL HUNTING RECORD

[illegible]

### Season Totals

Figure 6. The preseason notice that was sent to persons on the mailing list for the 1993 Illinois Woodcock Hunter Survey.

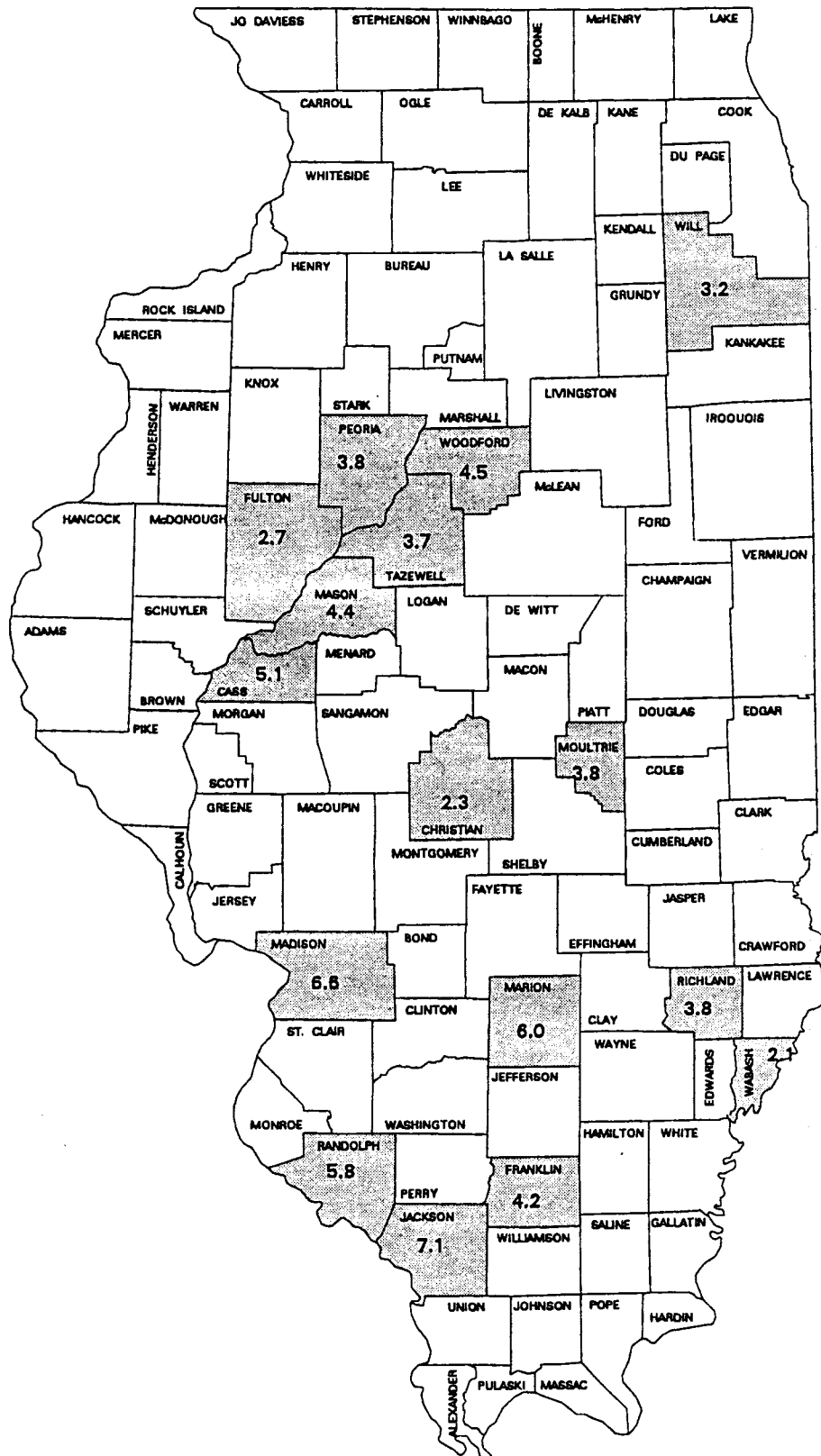


Figure 7. Counties for which each accounted for >2.0% of the woodcock harvest in Illinois in 1993. The percentage is listed for each county.